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# Intelligence Memorandum

*The Election Speeches for the Supreme Soviet*

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## The Election Speeches for the Supreme Soviet

### Introduction

The Soviet people went to the polls in June in their quadrennial exercise of "socialist democracy" to elect over 1,500 members of the legislature, the USSR Supreme Soviet. In keeping with relentless Soviet claims of "progress," the officially announced turnout of 99.98 percent of eligible voters was slightly higher than for the last election in 1970. Despite calls in some official quarters in the 1960s for multiple candidates in such elections, the Soviet voter still has only the choice of voting "yes" or "no" for the one candidate running from his electoral district.

Even that choice is circumscribed by the official eyes that follow the movements of the Soviet voter. Having established his eligibility to vote (and therefore his identity), he either hands over his "vote" unmarked, indicating "yes," or retires conspicuously to a booth, presumably to write "no." As in 1970, Estonia this year produced the highest proportion of negative votes and spoiled ballot papers, followed by the Russian Republic, Kazakhstan, and Kirgizia, but whether this was the result of dissatisfaction or of untidy electoral practices is unknown.

The Soviet procedures stand out even more strongly as a formal ritual when compared with the pseudo-democratic political process that obtains in Eastern Europe. Since the end of the Stalin era, several regimes in Eastern Europe have begun to put more names on the ballot than there are seats to be filled. The voter is still faced with a single list of candidates approved by the regime, but he is free to strike out the names of prominent leaders at the top of the ballot. This automatically confers the vote on the remaining names on the list.

No leaders of the regime or other approved candidates have ever been known to "lose" an election under this system, though some have squeaked by with as little as 85-90 percent of the votes cast in their constituencies. Thus, the elections in these East European countries serve to some extent as limited public preference polls with regard to the top leadership, and are so read by both the people and the regimes concerned.

No such tabulation is possible in Soviet elections, which simply result in a list of those elected. There is, however, a careful choreography that reveals the relative standing of individual leaders in terms of prestige in the Kremlin, if not of popular

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sentiment. Some electoral districts are "better" than others, some leaders receive more "honorary" nominations from districts they will not ultimately represent, and the closer to the date of the elections the individual leader gives his speech, the higher his standing in the pecking order.

The real political significance of the elections is found in the campaign speeches. These speeches give the individual leaders an opportunity to go on public record with their personal emphasis on aspects of policy issues facing the leadership as a whole. Overall, the leaders do not appear to sort themselves out into opposing camps, but instead present different groupings on different issues. The spread of opinions suggests pulling, tugging and politicking in which no clear polarization of positions has developed.

Speeches by members of the top leadership began this year on May 28 and continued until Brezhnev delivered the final address on June 14 (see chart).

Not all speeches are available in full text; many have been pieced together from recorded excerpts broadcast by the Moscow domestic radio and from summaries in the central press. Nevertheless, some firm and some tentative conclusions can be drawn from them.

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**The Soviet Leadership  
(in order of election speeches)**

**Politburo**

Brezhnev (General Secretary of Central Committee)

Podgorny (President of Supreme Soviet)

Kosygin (Premier of USSR)

Suslov (Secretary for Ideology and International Communism)

Kirilenko\* (Secretary for Party Organization and Industry)

Gromyko (Foreign Minister)

Kunayev\*\* (Kazakh First Secretary)

Mazurov (First Deputy Premier of USSR)

Kulakov\* (Secretary for Agriculture)

Shcherbitsky (Ukrainian First Secretary)

Andropov (Chairman of KGB)

Pelshe (Chairman of Party Control Commission)

Grechko\* (Defense Minister)

Grishin\* (Moscow First Secretary)

Shelepin (Head of Trade Unions)

Polyansky\* (Minister of Agriculture)

Masherov (Belorussian First Secretary)

**Politburo Candidate Members**

Ponomarev\* (Secretary for Non-Ruling Communist Parties)

Kapitonov\* (Secretary for Party Staffing)

Solomentsev\* (Premier of RSFSR)

Demichev (Secretary for Propaganda and Culture)

Ustinov\* (Secretary for Defense Industry)

**Non-Politburo Secretaries**

Dolgikh\* (Secretary for Heavy Industry)

Katushev\* (Secretary for Communist Bloc Liaison)

Romanov (Leningrad First Secretary)

Rashidov (Uzbek First Secretary)

\*Full text of speech not available

\*\*Did not deliver speech due to illness

Underlined speeches were broadcast live

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### Brezhnev's Position in the Leadership

Although there was no question about Brezhnev's overall pre-eminence—indeed, his mini-personality cult was enhanced by the election speeches—some intriguing differences emerged in the way other leaders referred to the General Secretary.

Brezhnev gained his strongest personal encomiums from Kirilenko—his unofficial deputy; from party secretary for agriculture Kulakov, who works under Brezhnev's close guidance; and from septuagenarian party inspector general Pelshe. KGB chairman Andropov and two former comers who have suffered political reverses—trade union boss Shelepin and Minister of Agriculture Polyansky—also praised Brezhnev highly. Politburo members or party secretaries Ponomarev, Kapitonov, Ustinov, Dolgikh, Romanov, Rashidov, and Solomentsev were equally enthusiastic.

Premier Kosygin (appropriately, as a near equal of Brezhnev); his first deputy, Mazurov; Foreign Minister Gromyko (somewhat surprisingly); Moscow party boss Grishin; and junior party secretary for ideology and culture Demichev delivered proper but relatively perfunctory praise of Brezhnev's leadership.

At the other end of the spectrum, with an almost chilly attitude, were two other leaders almost equal to Brezhnev in their standing—President Podgorny and senior party secretary Suslov. In the same cool and reserved category were Belorussian party boss Masherov and junior party secretary Katushev. Defense Minister Grechko's speech is available only in a summarized version in the central press, but he apparently also is on this end of the spectrum.

It is significant that all speakers mentioned Brezhnev's contributions in foreign affairs, but only his fervent supporters referred to his leadership in domestic affairs. Clearly, an effort was made to present a front of monolithic unity concerning detente on the eve of the President's visit to Moscow. Domestic problems, however, required no such unity, and the selectivity with which these aspects of Brezhnev's leadership were praised, as well as the speeches themselves, suggest deep uncertainties within the leadership as to the future directions for Soviet economic planning and management, both over the short term and in the long-term plan scheduled to cover 1976-90.

### Domestic Issues

#### Planning and Management

One common theme in the election speeches was the need for improvement of planning and management of the economy. The leadership's concern

seems to be based on a growing awareness of the problems involved in attempting to apply the fruits of the "scientific and technological revolution" to the inflexible and unreceptive economic system.

The repetition of the theme indicated concern, but the variety of approaches showed little agreement even on where to start. Insistence that all would be well if everyone would just work "conscientiously" contrasted with a call for adoption of "a comprehensive systems approach." The wide spread of opinions suggested pulling, tugging, and politicking in which no clear polarization of positions has yet developed.

The dimensions of the debate on the organization of the economy were apparently defined by Brezhnev in his speech to the plenum of the party's Central Committee last December. The full text of this speech has never been published, but references to it in the press and by other leaders suggest that the General Secretary favored some sort of reorganization of economic planning and management. Excerpts published in a new collection of Brezhnev's works this spring indicate that he called for "an entire system of serious measures" to improve both management and planning. Podgorny, speaking shortly after the plenum, insisted that no "radical" measures were contemplated and delivered an unexpected defense of the sectoral approach (e.g., agriculture, defense, heavy industry, consumer goods) in planning and management. His apparently gratuitous defense of the sectoral system raised the possibility that Brezhnev either on his own initiative or under pressure from other leaders may have proposed its modification.

The December plenum was cited frequently and enthusiastically in the press for three weeks. In early January, however, a Central Committee appeal for "socialist competition"—the time-honored technique to raise production through exhortation—took the spotlight, and references to the plenum dwindled.

In his campaign speech, Brezhnev did not refer to the reorganization that seemed to have been at the heart of his plenum speech, although he again called in general terms for improved planning and methods of management, and for increased use of "economic levers" in the economy. In the mid-1960s, "economic levers" were equated with economic reform. Brezhnev's most specific criticism was directed against the plethora of "legal controls" in the economy, the "thousands of different directions and instructions," often outmoded but still on the books, that have "piled up" and stifle initiative. "Unfortunately," he noted, "the necessary attention was not paid to this matter for a long time." This remark could have been expected to annoy both Podgorny, who is responsible for legislation, and Kosygin, whose Council of Ministers issues and operates under such instructions. Soviet economic reorganizations and reforms in the past have, indeed, simply

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added layer upon layer to the complex list of plan fulfillment "indicators" that are used to guide the activities of industrial enterprises throughout the USSR.

Brezhnev commented that the December plenum had discussed this problem, and he predicted that the Supreme Soviet, the government, ministries, and departments would study the matter "seriously." He did not mention "socialist competition" as a means of increasing production.

Podgorny made no reference to a need to improve planning. Instead, he called for an improved "style" of work in economic agencies. He asserted that lower echelons that passed problems up for solution usually had the authority to resolve them themselves; the possible implication was that there is nothing wrong with the system itself. He represented the December plenum as having called for only a strengthening of discipline and order, with no hint that any organizational proposals had been made. And while he did not specifically cite the appeal of the Central Committee in January, he described socialist competition as "the powerful motive force, now as in the past, for a further boost in the economy."

In contrast to Brezhnev's criticism of outmoded regulations that stifle initiative, Podgorny called repeatedly for unwavering obedience to existing norms. In a remarkably defensive passage, he pointed to all the legislative work done by the Supreme Soviet in the past 15 years (he himself only took office in December 1965) and concluded with some anticlimactic remarks on new laws on the state notary system.

Kosygin devoted much of his speech to the progress being made in various sectors of the economy. He referred to the importance of improved management and cited the "decisive" influence of scientific and technical progress in increasing labor productivity. He touched only briefly on the December plenum, although he did credit it with playing a very large organizational role in achieving economic successes and eliminating shortcomings.

Kosygin's references to improvement in planning were made in the context of developing a longer term plan for 1976-1990. There was no hint of a change in planning methods. He did, however, cite favorably the shift of Soviet industry to a two- or three-tier system based on production associations. A law embodying this change in the structure of the economy was passed this year, although it has not yet been fully implemented. Kosygin considered very important those measures announced this spring that call on consumer and food industries to establish closer ties with retailers in the hope of achieving greater responsiveness of supply to demand. Unlike Podgorny, he gave only formal obeisance to the concept of socialist competition as a means of encouraging output.

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Suslov, as might be expected of the senior party secretary for ideology, joined Podgorny in expressing his faith in socialist competition. He made the most precise and detailed reference of any of the leaders to the appeal of the Central Committee in January 1974, asserting it had led to an increase in industrial production of nearly two percent over last year. Podgorny and Kosygin at least gave lip service to the December plenum, but Suslov completely ignored it. Far from seeing any need for changes in planning and management, he simply called for discipline.

Kirilenko's speech is available only in summarized form, and conclusions drawn from it should be treated with reserve. Still, there is no flavor of enthusiasm in it, either for the new paths of the December plenum or for changes in planning and management.

Mazurov, Kosygin's first deputy, referred to both the plenum and the appeal. While he credited Brezhnev with having advanced fundamental proposals at the plenum, he spoke only of improving management, making no reference to planning in this context. In one passage, however, he noted that measures were being worked out to improve the planning system by greater use of economic "levers" and incentives.

Shelepin, in keeping with his position as a former challenger who has stubbed his toe politically, played it relatively safe. He cited not only the 1974 but also the 1973 Central Committee appeal. He also noted that at the December plenum, Brezhnev had laid down new, fundamentally important measures aimed at improving planning, economic efficiency, and organization.

The most radical stand on technological improvement of the economy was taken by Masherov, the Belorussian party chief. He called for a transition from the worn-out tracks of former practice and archaic organizational methods to the rails of a modern, scientifically substantiated, rational system of management. He specifically mentioned a "comprehensive systems approach" utilizing computers, mathematical models, and other sophisticated techniques. Masherov attacked attempts "to combine what cannot be combined—ultra-modern equipment such as the computer with obsolete management methods and information gathering." Only Ustinov, party secretary for defense industry, mentioned similar technological techniques for improving industrial efficiency.

Masherov's enthusiasm for innovation contrasted particularly with the approach of Shcherbitsky, the Ukrainian party boss. Shcherbitsky insisted that improving work quality is more important than technological progress. Socialist competition, he said, "organically binds" producers to economic

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policy. Brezhnev presumably handpicked Shcherbitsky when the latter was elevated to his present post two years ago, but the Ukrainian party boss may now be responding to the pressures of his own constituency rather than to those of his patron in the center.

#### **Longer Term Issues**

The debate on economic reform may be spilling over into the area of intraparty, and even socialist, democracy. In the past, calls for innovation in the management of the economy have been associated with pleas for more "openness" in the discussion of problems and policies. At least two of the Supreme Soviet campaign speeches suggest that a revival of this debate may be taking place, although the sensitivity of the subject demands a more muted tone than the discussion of economic affairs.

In a discussion of the further development of socialist democracy and the political system of mature socialism, Brezhnev said that the need for an increase in the political awareness of the working people and the extension of *glasnost*—openness—in the work of party, soviet, and economic organizations was especially urgent. The term *glasnost* has a checkered past, developing "liberal" connotations during the mid-60s and falling into disuse after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. As far as is known, neither Brezhnev nor any other current leader has previously used the word in this manner. Its appearance in the present context might reflect a realization that a greater flow of information is necessary if the increasingly complex technological society is to operate efficiently. Unless he more clearly defines what he means by the term, however, Brezhnev risks stirring up greater ferment among Soviet "liberal" intellectuals.

Podgorny took a rather different approach. He called for the strengthening of discipline and order in Soviet life, declaring that "the higher the degree of organization and self-discipline of all members of society, the more effectively will the system of socialist democracy function." He noted vaguely that "socialist democracy is developing and improving," but specified that in its present stage, the fundamental task is to combine the scientific-technological revolution with socialism. Podgorny also made an intriguing reference to "unwelcome proposals" to improve socialist democracy according to bourgeois standards, but it is not clear whether he had in mind Western criticisms, those from dissident physicist Andrey Sakharov, or Brezhnev's modest proposal.

During the mid-60s, agitation for *glasnost* was associated with the efforts of younger, technically trained party members to influence Soviet policy. These "young Turks" met opposition from older members who maintained that the primary responsibility of a communist was political, not

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technical, supervision. Discussion in the speeches of technical versus ideological training for cadres may be a continuation of this debate and another facet of the *glasnost* controversy.

Belorussian boss Masharov made the strongest pitch for technical training, declaring "appeals and exhortation alone are not enough." Masharov has also been the strongest supporter of technological innovation in managing the economy. First Deputy Premier Mazurov, Masharov's predecessor as Belorussian party boss, called for improvement in production "not by numbers but by skill." Demichev, party secretary for propaganda and culture, stressed the need for constant growth of skills and expertise.

Most of the other leaders confined themselves to bland statements on the development of high moral qualities through socialist production. Kosygin spoke of the high degree of moral fiber exhibited in the Soviet man. Kirilenko, party boss for heavy industry, referred to the creative activeness of the masses in building communism. Among the stronger statements on the importance of political virtues in production was the declaration by Ukrainian boss Shcherbitsky that work quality depends on "the level of political work in the collective."

Most of the other leaders also stuck to generalities concerning the virtues of the Soviet political system. Typical is Suslov's stricture that officials be "attentive to the needs of the population, that they avoid red tape in receiving visitors and in examining their requests and complaints, and that they strictly adhere to Soviet laws." Kosygin, Mazurov, and Shelepin spoke of the increasing authority and broad social representation of the soviets. Suslov contrasted the Supreme Soviet deputies to the US Congress in terms of social background, age, and other features. Such accolades for Soviet parliamentarianism, however, are standard propaganda fare and have little substantive importance.

#### Long-Term Planning

By early 1976, Moscow should unveil its much-heralded 15-year (1976-1990) economic plan. The campaign speeches of the top leaders hint at the scope and direction of the project. Brezhnev gave the most detailed and enthusiastic description of the idea. He stated that the next five-year plan will play an integral part in a general long-term plan for the development of the national economy. The result will be "not simply another five-year plan, but documents of truly programmatic significance." He described the plan as "an immutable condition for successful economic development."

Brezhnev placed consumer welfare high on the agenda. For the three five-year plans, he called for more high-quality foodstuffs and consumer goods, expanded public services, and higher wages. He asserted that the 15-year plan will provide for the "reconstruction of the majority of our cities and villages" and "a well-appointed apartment for every family."

The other leaders did not extend as unqualified an endorsement of long-term planning. Kosygin referred to the next five-year plan several times in different contexts before mentioning that "work is in progress on a draft long-term plan." Without specifying the time frame, he declared that the project "will facilitate the organization of a harmonious system of interlocked continuous plans, long-term, medium-term, and annual plans." Podgorny's statement did not commit its author; he simply announced that an integrated approach involving long-term planning "today characterizes the party's whole economic policy."

Mazurov said that long-range planning was a major new step along the path of the building of communism, which would take into account the enormous advantages to accrue from greater technological development. Demichev pointed out that long-term planning was one of several means by which the party provides for future generations. Curiously, the *Pravda* summaries of the speeches of Kirilenko and Kulakov, party bosses of industry and agriculture respectively, contain no references to the subject.

The attempt by the Kremlin to project long-term trends will have serious implications for both domestic and foreign policy. Clearly, the difficulties attendant on meshing three successive five-year plans will heighten the importance of planning methods, and can be expected to aggravate the always contentious subject of resource allocations.

It is obvious from his description of the long-term plan as a document of "programmatic significance" that Brezhnev is trying to use the plan to institutionalize his own policies so that they will continue beyond his leadership. (By 1990, he would be 84.) Soviet plans are referred to as the "law" of the land. Although they may be adjusted and their goals revised (generally downward), the overall directions of the plans are solemnly approved by party congresses and plenums and by the "legislature"—the Supreme Soviet—not only in their five-year form but also yearly.

#### Foreign Policy Issues

##### Varied Enthusiasm on Detente

Although disagreements on foreign policy issues were not expressed as openly as those over domestic policy, variations of tone and emphasis

revealed some differences. All speakers favored detente, but some were more enthusiastic than others, and assessments of the motivations and intentions of the West diverged.

Brezhnev, the leader most visibly associated with detente, came out strongly for further improvement in relations with both the US and Europe. He recognized that problems remain and that some matters "are not yet ripe," but insisted that the two nations should not "mark time." He called for continued improvement in relations with the US despite "fortuitous factors"—a clear allusion to Watergate—and was optimistic about the then upcoming summit with the President.

Brezhnev spoke well of summits in general, noting that better relations with Europe had resulted in part from efforts at earlier summits with De Gaulle, Pompidou, and Brandt. The Soviet leader said that Giscard and Schmidt had pledged continued progress. The General Secretary roundly criticized "those who are pursuing tactics of delay and procrastination" at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Regarding the two areas of the world where Soviet and US interests have recently collided, Brezhnev was notably more optimistic than his colleagues. He cited the "victory" of the Vietnamese "people" and commented that "dangerous hotbeds" of tensions in the Middle East are being liquidated.

Premier Kosygin, too, was sanguine about detente. He declared that the change in relations with the US is in the interests of the Soviet people. The Premier's remarks about remaining "contradictions and difficulties" were mild and more than offset by pledges to continue and expand "cooperation with the capitalist countries."

He hewed close to Brezhnev's positions on foreign policy, except on two points:

- He declared that the easing of international tensions "will not mean an end to the class struggle between the two opposed social systems." Brezhnev apparently felt no need to make such a declaration.
- Kosygin was less tough than Brezhnev on the Indochina war. The former spoke of the "end of aggression"; the latter of "American imperialist aggression" and the continuing importance of political struggle in the region.

Not surprisingly, Brezhnev also had strong support from his top deputy, Kirilenko, who was effusive on the success of summitry and the prospect for

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extensive cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union, and from KGB chief Andropov, who endorsed Brezhnev's policies and offered a generally upbeat view of detente. Ukrainian boss Shcherbitsky, who diverged from Brezhnev on domestic policy, approved the party leader's course on detente and gave him personal credit for successes in foreign policy.

Reservations concerning detente were most clearly expressed by President Podgorny. He credited the success of Moscow's foreign policy specifically to the growing strength of the Soviet Union. This strength, he said, enables socialism to wrest concessions from the West. While reciting the usual list of benefits produced by detente—the end of the Vietnam war, normalization of relations with Bonn, and the convening of the European security conference—Podgorny tied any future progress to the solution of the "acute social problems of our time." Speaking of the then-approaching summit, Podgorny could only hope that the results would coincide with the interests of the Soviet people.

Ideology chief Suslov was apparently on the same wave length as Podgorny. His speech included an extensive discussion of the crisis of modern capitalism. While conceding that a relaxation of tension between states might occur, Suslov pointed to an "unceasing confrontation" between the two systems. He cited inflation and the growth of unemployment as signs that the West is in serious difficulty.

Suslov's line was supported by Shelepin, the trade union boss, and Demichev. Shelepin spoke of the "hereditary nightmare of crisis" infecting the capitalist system, while Demichev defined detente in terms of consolidating the Soviet Union's leading position in the world.

Foreign Minister Gromyko was less effusive about detente than either Brezhnev or Kosygin. He expressed reservations about the US and noted that "zigzags" might occur in relations between the two countries. Unlike colleagues who saw the forces behind detente as irreversible, he observed only that "it will not be easy" for American critics to reverse the tide.

He stressed the seriousness of the remaining problems in the Middle East and said that "half measures favored by Israel and its backers must not be allowed." In a general statement designed to emphasize the Soviet Union's leading role in world affairs, he declared that "not a single" important international problem can be solved without Soviet participation.

Ponomarev, who has overlapping responsibilities with Gromyko, also gave a mixed notice to detente. He saw the results of summity as "extraor-

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dinarily important" and spoke approvingly of "realistically minded political circles in the capitalist states," but he also called attention to "the intrigues and adventures of imperialism."

Kosygin's first deputy, Mazurov, seemed to give pride of place to relations with Europe. He discussed Soviet achievements in dealing with the US in the past tense, while expressing great hopes for future Soviet-European relations. He also differed with his boss on the Middle East.

Defense Minister Grechko, whose speech is available only in summary form, seemed to express modest expectations for detente. He declared that steps toward preventing war have "successfully begun," but attributed the progress of detente to the defensive capability of the Soviet Union.

#### Unity Lacking on National Security Issues

Issues of national security, particularly arms limitation, appear to have been the subject of some disagreement. While Brezhnev and Kosygin stressed the value of limiting arms as a means of ensuring national security and deterring war, Podgorny and Suslov expressed strong preferences for maintaining powerful Soviet forces.

Overall, however, the leaders do not appear to sort out into two opposing camps. Podgorny and Suslov, for example, seem to disagree over the seriousness of the Chinese threat. Gromyko indicated a preference for Europe in the relaxation of tensions, while Ponomarev placed more emphasis on the US. Both called for strengthening the military. The campaign statements do not establish clear lines of conflict, but they do show different groupings on different issues.

Party chief Brezhnev stressed the need for further progress in the negotiations on arms limitation. He assured his audience that Soviet leaders want political detente to be complemented by military detente. He explained that Moscow has not yet succeeded because of the opposition of certain circles in the US, but added that the Soviet-US agreements of 1972 and 1973 have set the two powers on the right path. Brezhnev appeared to be addressing his own critics as much as Westerners when he referred to "the supporters of the arms race" who believe that reducing arms means taking a risk. He argued that there is immeasurably more risk in continuing the unrestrained accumulation of arms.

Premier Kosygin seems to agree. He may well have had Soviet opponents of arms limitation in mind when he spoke of some in the West who "believe that increased military expenditures can be accommodated amid a

policy of detente." Such a policy, Kosygin stated, will "increase the danger of war and result in unending waste of mankind's strength and resources." The Soviet Premier said that "the USSR resolutely rejects such an approach" and noted that the Soviet Union "is reliably protected by our armed forces." By placing this statement on the strength of the military in the present tense, he seemed to undermine the argument that Soviet defense needs bolstering.

President Podgorny's assessment of Soviet defense needs differed considerably. Since "militarists" in the West are pressing their governments for increased arms expenditures, he asserted, the Soviet Union must "take appropriate measures to strengthen our country's defense capability."

The available summary of Defense Minister Grechko's speech suggests that he, like Podgorny, had reservations concerning arms limitation. Grechko warned that "imperialism is even now preparing for war" and that "the danger of war remains a grim reality of our times." Grechko argued that Soviet defenses must therefore remain prepared not only for the most likely course of events but for "unexpected shifts" as well. In contrast to Kosygin, he spoke of the "indivisibility" of strengthening peace and defense.

The defense minister apparently did not make an explicit pitch for increasing Soviet armaments. Instead, he acknowledged that the government is "doing everything necessary to maintain the defense of the country at the level of present-day requirements." He assured his listeners that the Soviet armed forces possess good modern weapons and military equipment.

Foreign Minister Gromyko also warned that the threat of nuclear war has not ended. He noted with approval that the Soviet government is strengthening the defense capability of its armed forces. Ustinov, the party secretary for defense industry, declared that the "imperialists" have not laid down their arms, and he called for greater military strength.

Suslov, Shelepin, Ponomarev, and Mazurov all called for vigilance and a "strengthening" or "consolidation" of the military. Kirilenko and Demichev expressed their satisfaction with the present state of Soviet defense, but their speeches are available only in heavily edited and summarized form. KGB chairman Andropov declared that "the land of the Soviets now is not to be vanquished by the military path," but warned of attempts at subversion.

#### Views on China

The China question got considerably less attention from Soviet leaders than detente and national security. Two officials who normally would discuss the issue—Grechko and Ponomarev—either did not or their remarks were not reported. Among those who mentioned China, attitudes ranged from mild to belligerent, with most of the Politburo, Brezhnev included, falling somewhere in between.

Brezhnev asserted that China has aligned itself with representatives of extreme reaction, such as the present Chilean government and out-of-power conservatives in West Germany, the UK, and the US. He nevertheless concluded his remarks on China by maintaining that the Soviet leaders continue to support a return to normal relations with China, and he spoke of "the great Chinese people."

Podgorny and Shelepin were more outspoken than ever on the military threat that China poses to the USSR. The Soviet President went so far as to refer to China's "nuclear missile potential." This is the first such statement by a Soviet leader since Grechko brought the matter up last January. Shelepin also broke new ground for a Soviet leader when he used the China "threat" to justify strengthening the USSR's defenses.

Kosygin's approach was more moderate, but still less conciliatory than Brezhnev's. He did not discuss China as an explicit threat to Soviet security, but depicted China's action as directed against the "socialist community."

Gromyko took a somewhat more conciliatory approach than Brezhnev. Suslov's remarks on China—in marked contrast to his position in March 1969, when he seemed to see China as a real danger—were distinctly mild, as were those of KGB chief Andropov.

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